



COMMITTEE ON
**EDUCATION
& LABOR**
REPUBLICANS

**COMMITTEE
STATEMENT**

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader
Committee on Education and Labor Hearing:
"Building Back Better: Investing in Improving Schools, Creating Jobs, and
Strengthening Families and our Economy"
April 28, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

"When President Biden first announced that his administration was working on an infrastructure plan, I was cautiously optimistic. Why? Because Republicans and Democrats agree that investment in American infrastructure is vitally important.

But here is where Democrats get it wrong. When Republicans talk about 'infrastructure,' we actually mean it. We want to invest in roads, bridges, buildings, and highways. For Democrats, 'infrastructure' is anything that appeases their left-wing base and union allies. That's not an exaggeration - 95 percent of the Biden administration's American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan funds a socialist wish list.

The left may be trying to further twist the English language to suit their political aims, but let's call these bills what they are: Democrat power grabs disguised as infrastructure with little real help for struggling Americans.

These bills wrongly assume the federal government is the solution to our nation's woes rather than the cause. Our country will exceed \$100 trillion in budget deficits by 2050. Expensive, partisan promises are driving that number to record highs. President Biden's solution? Tax job creators and taxpayers, the same people who are driving our economic recovery from COVID-19.

We cannot balance our spending sprees on the backs of hardworking Americans and our children and grandchildren.

Nor can we continue to blindly throw money at our education system and call that a solution. Despite allocating trillions in education spending over the last several decades, student outcomes are underwhelming. Remote learning and the COVID-19 pandemic have only driven home the importance of targeted, local intervention in student success. If our students, particularly students of color who have been disproportionately impacted by Democrats' shutdown politics, are going to bounce back from months of learning loss and compete in an increasingly global economy, we need fundamental reforms to our education system, not a few extra zeros at the end of a budget request.

Yet despite evidence that more spending alone will not measurably improve student outcomes, Democrats are attempting to dive even deeper into taxpayers' pockets to shell out billions in additional education funding. One hundred billion dollars will be allocated to school buildings even though only three percent of our nation's permanent school buildings were in immediate need of repair according to federal data.

This is a failure to accurately assess the problem, a failure to come up with an adequate solution, and a failure to protect the taxpayer funds we have been entrusted with when we were elected to the people's house.

These problems aren't limited to K-12 education. Government overreach and easy, universal access to taxpayer funds have contributed to exorbitant college tuition rates and the student debt crisis. The Democrats' plan doubles down on failed policies of the past, wrongly assuming that more spending and more government mandates are the solution to our languishing education system.

Democrats love to tell us that offering free college is the answer to sky-rocketing tuition rates. But the cost of postsecondary education doesn't simply disappear, it means someone else is on the hook for the bill. Increasing student aid will only drive up tuition prices even higher. Once again, more money is a far cry from the sensible solution.

The Biden administration's failure to address the root causes of our inadequate education system also hampers our ability to cultivate a qualified workforce for the 21st century. While our workforce and economic recovery ensues, the Biden administration is ushering in policies that will limit opportunities for workers and

job creators while providing political favors to enrich Democrats' Big Labor allies.

The American Jobs Plan calls for all construction projects to utilize project labor agreements and government mandated prevailing wages which discourages non-union contractors from bidding on taxpayer-funded construction contracts and will drive up construction costs by more than 20 percent. This is far from a win for the American people. Rather, it's another win for union bosses.

Republicans support policies that harness the power of the free market to create jobs and improve the nation's education and workforce development systems. These proposals fall embarrassingly short of that goal. Instead of delivering targeted aid that will affect real change, Democrats are once again throwing money at a problem under the guise of relief. Americans deserve better."

###